THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) City Gas Distribution projects have not been implemented in Ranchi, Jamshedpur and other cities of Jharkhand, because, as of now, there is no natural gas pipeline available in the vicinity of these cities.

In order to promote investment from public as well as private sector for laying trunk natural gas pipelines and city/local natural gas distribution networks throughout the country, the Government of India has enacted 'The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006' and notified the 'Policy for Development of Natural Gas Pipelines and City or Local Natural Gas Distribution Networks'. Providing of PNG facilities depends upon availability of gas, setting up of necessary infrastructure and economic viability.

Promotion of Tourism to Uttarakhand

1213. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government proposes to take to promote tourism in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand during the financial year; 2008-2009;

(b) whether Government also proposes to setup a few hotels to meet the requirements of middle income group in the State; and

(c) if so, what are the names of the places identified for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) Development and promotion of tourism is undertaken primarily by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. However, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, extends financial assistance to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for tourism related projects which are identified in consultation and interaction with them under the scheme 'Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits'.

Project proposals received from the State Governments/Union Territory that are complete in all respects are approved on the basis of inter-se priority and funds released subject to availability under respective head.

Construction of hotels is primarily a private sector activity. The Ministry of Tourism is in regular touch with the State Governments and various land owning agencies like Railways, Ministry of Civil Aviation etc. for creating land banks for hotels, allocating land on joint venture/revenue sharing basis, adopting single window clearance and increasing FAR/FSI etc. The Ministry of Tourism offers capital subsidy for budget hotels of 1, 2 and 3 star category in the country.

Promotion of domestic tourism

1214. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that it has been found that Government has missed the point that domestic tourism has to be its building block for credible tourism industry, which then will attract foreigners;

(b) whether it is also a fact that India with a domestic tourist market currently believed to be as a big as 367 million has only been sputtering along, producing more smoke than motion in a largely futile race; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to groom our travel sports into real charmers?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) National Tourism Policy 2002, recognizes the importance of domestic tourism, paricularly tourism connected with pilgrimage, and suggests it to be so designed that the infrastructure created under it serves as a backbone of international tourism in times to come. As per the information available from States/UTs, the number of domestic tourist visits in India in 2006 was 462 million as compared to 392 million in 2005.

(c) Development and promotion of tourist places/spots is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/UT Administrations. However, Ministry of Tourism extends financial assistance to the State Governments/UT Administrations for development of tourism, on the basis of the proposals received from them, subject to availability of funds and *inter-se* priorities.

Special incentive scheme for budget hotels

1215. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated any special incentive scheme to encourage budget hotels to boost tourism in the country in general and Andhra Pradesh in particular; and

(b) if so, the details of the scheme and the amount earmarked for such scheme?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Ministry of Tourism has formulated a scheme, to provide incentive to hotels of 1 to 3 star and Heritage Basic categories all over the country where the hotels projects have been commissioned and classified w.e.f. 01.04.2007 to 31.03.2008. The incentive will be in the form of capital subsidy of Rs.2.00 lakh per room subject to a maximum of Rs. 30.00 lakh to one star hotel, Rs. 3.00 lakh per room subject to a maximum of Rs. 75.00 lakh to two star hotel, Rs. 3.00 lakh per room subject to a maximum of Rs. 100.00 lakh to three star and Heritage Basic category hotels.

The scheme is valid all over the country including the State of Andhra Pradesh. An amount of Rs. 20.00 crore have been earmarked for the financial year 2007-08.

Tourism related schemes

1216. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any scheme to carry out tourism related schemes, surveys, studies, plans, market research etc.;

(b) if so, the essential features of the scheme including the provision for financial assistance;

(c) whether any surveys, study, market research etc. has been carried out under the scheme for the State of Goa, exclusively or otherwise;

(d) the agencies which have carried out such work; and

(e) the details of financial assistance given to such agencies?